

Expanded Subdivision Regulations

FACT SHEET

(Updated 12.5.05)

Purpose of the Project:

This rewrite of the Subdivision Regulations has been undertaken:

- To create an expanded set of subdivision regulations that reflects the diversity of the development throughout Davidson County;
- To better reflect actual practice in implementing the regulations; and
- To ensure consistency in references and correct reference and typographical errors.

For the most part, applicants can continue to develop subdivisions as before but they can also opt to take advantage of the opportunity for increased flexibility that provides for innovations in the design of subdivisions. The proposed plat approval involves a two-step process for minor subdivisions and a three-step process for major subdivisions.

Importance of Subdivision Regulations

The first major step in the development process is to divide a parcel of land into lots and streets. How land is divided defines the pattern of a community, which in turn shapes its character.

Dividing land also defines traffic circulation patterns and access, dedicates rights-of way, and reserves tracts of land to protect environmental resources (floodplains, wetlands, forested areas). Subdivision regulations guide development of land consistent with the established policies of the Metro Nashville Government. Subdivision regulations provide the community with an opportunity to ensure that new neighborhoods and developments are properly designed and that new subdivisions are integrated into the community.

Highlights of the Expanded Subdivision Regulations

Chapter 1. General Provisions

Chapter Purpose: Provides the authority to regulate subdivisions.

Proposed Changes: Revised to reflect updating of the regulations.

Added:

- A how to use these regulations section.
- Declaration of development preference.
- Automatic updating of cross references and numbering when amendments are made.

Chapter 2. Procedures for Plat Approvals

Chapter Purpose: Describes the application and review procedures for subdividing land. (Formerly Chapter 3)

Proposed Changes: Substantial amendments are proposed.

Formalizes the categorization of subdivisions into:

- Major – subdivision of two or more lots, major infrastructure improvements

- Minor – subdivision of more than two lots, no major infrastructure improvements
- Partition – subdivision into no more than two lots, no infrastructure improvements

Three tier approval process for major subdivisions:

- Concept Plan, similar to preliminary plat, approved by the Planning Commission, not required for partitions.
- Development Plan, similar to construction plans, now in final plat stage, Executive Director approval if no major changes. Not required for minor subdivisions or partitions.
- Final Subdivision Plat, plat to be recorded includes only information required to be on a final plat, Executive Director approval if no major changes

Formalizes coordinated review by all departments throughout the approval process.

Provides an option for coordinated of subdivision approval and zoning change amendments.

Chapter 3. Requirements for Improvements, Reservations, and Designs

Chapter Purpose: Describes the development and design standards for subdivisions. (Formerly Chapter 2)

Proposed Changes: While subdivision development may occur largely as permitted now, both minor and substantive changes have been made to this chapter.

Critical lots: many of the sites left are more difficult to develop, proposed additions to the regulations allow these sites to be looked at in the context of the subdivision rather than just as individual lots.

Flag lots: added criteria for when this lot pattern may be appropriate

Double frontage lots: added a preferred development pattern for lots fronting on to arterials and collectors

Lot comparability: increased range to 400 feet, clarified that abutting does not include lots to the back as was intended in the amendments made several years ago.

Blocks: maximum block length reduced to 1,200 feet

Streets:

- Improvements section modified to reflect actual practice.
- Tables removed and references to the respective department's standards added.
- Added preferred alternatives to cul-de-sacs and landscape requirement for turnarounds of 50 foot or greater radius.
- Private streets permitted in UDO's, SP Districts and Rural Areas Provision for infill development on non-standard streets added.
- Construction Inspection section modified to reflect actual practice.

Signs: added requirements for temporary dead end street and greenway signs.

Public Water Facilities: added requirement to meet fire flow capacity.

Underground Utilities: added reference.

Chapter 4. Conservation Subdivisions

Chapter Purpose: A new chapter that enables a development that groups housing on the more buildable portion of a tract, while preserving at least 50 percent of the tract including natural drainage systems, open space, and environmentally and culturally sensitive areas.

Conservation Subdivisions:

- Provide for the preservation of open space as a watershed protection measure.
- Permit flexibility of design in order to promote environmentally sensitive and efficient use of the land
- Preserve in perpetuity: Unique or sensitive natural resources, scenic views, and historic and archaeological sites.
- Reduce the amount of infrastructure, including paved surfaces and utility easements, necessary for residential development.
- Minimize land disturbance and removal of vegetation during construction resulting in reduced erosion and sedimentation.
- Promote interconnected greenways and wildlife and other natural corridors through the community.

Proposed Requirements:

- A pre-application conference is required and applicants follow a four-step process to layout the subdivision.
- Applied to Natural Conservation, Rural and Interim Non-Urban policy areas.
- Address roads designated as scenic arterials.
- Applies to AR2, R80, RS80, R40, RS40 zoning districts.
- Only single family development permitted.
- Requires a transition in lot size from abutting properties before smaller lots are allowed.
- Zoning code amendments will be necessary to fully implement Conservation Subdivisions.

Chapter 5. Walkable Subdivisions

Chapter Purpose: A new chapter that provides standards to support more walkable subdivisions through improved connections, reduced block lengths, discouragement of cul-de-sacs, and the provision of context sensitive street design.

Walkable Subdivisions:

- Allow for lots to front onto an open space.
- Discourage double frontage lots.
- Provide for subdivision standards to increase opportunities for home ownership
- Encourage open spaces.
- Support hamlet-style development and infill development.

- Encourage open spaces.
 - Emphasize street and pedestrian connectivity in residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments.
- Zoning Code amendments will be necessary to implement portions of this chapter.
- Cottage subdivisions: small-lot subdivisions facing onto a green space.
 - Attached housing in fee simple ownership.
 - Both are only applicable in zoning districts allowing multi-family residential uses.

Chapter 6. Assurance for Completion and Maintenance of Improvements

Chapter Purpose: Describes the process for an applicant to guarantee the completion and maintenance of required improvements following final plat of subdivision approval. (Formerly Chapter 4)

Proposed Changes: This chapter has been updated to reflect actual practices. More detail has been provided on the process for releasing, reducing, or extending performance bonds.

Chapter 7. Definitions

Chapter Purpose: Defines the words and terms used in the regulations. (Formerly Chapter 5)

Proposed Changes: New definitions have been added, a number of definitions have been modified to correspond with other Metro code definitions, and definitions that were no longer relevant to the regulations have been deleted.

Chapter 8. Adoption of Regulations and Amendments

Chapter Purpose: Provides details of the adoption of the regulations and is the place to record future amendments to the regulations. (Formerly Chapter 6)

Proposed Changes: The format is unchanged.

Appendices

Appendices Purpose: Provided for informational purposes, are adopted under separate authority by the Planning Commission from the Subdivision Regulations and are subject to change as conditions warrant.

Appendix A: Contains all plat certificates

Appendix B: Critical lot plan requirements

Appendix C: New, Outline for Construction Process

Proposed Changes: The Submittal Requirements Check List has been removed from the Appendices and is a stand-alone document.

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